

REMARKS/AUGUEMENTS

This communication is in response to the Office Action mailed June 29, 2005.

Claim Amendments

Applicant has amended the claims to clarify their subject matter. The claim amendments are summarized here. However, the claims themselves, and not the summary provided here, govern the scope of the claims.

That said, independent claims 1, 17 and 31 are amended to further clarify the following features (the features (a), (b), (c) and (d) being referred to by shorthand in the discussion below):

(a) the mounting member is made of metal, and at least one engaging stepped face is previously formed an inner surface thereof at a boundary between a recessed portion and a non-recessed portion;

(b) the resin outer sleeve has a smooth outer surface at least at a location to be engaged with the engaging stepped face of the mounting member before being press fit into the bore of the mounting member;

(c) the smooth outer surface at the location to be engaged with the engaging stepped face has an outside diameter larger than an inside diameter of the non-recessed portion and approximately equal to an inside diameter of the recessed portion; and

(d) with the rubber bushing being press fit into the bore of the mounting member, one portion of the outer sleeve situated facing the non-recessed portion of the mounting member is compressed in diameter, while a first portion of the outer sleeve situated facing the recessed portion of the mounting member expands in diameter by means of elastic recovery force in order to enter the recessed portion, so that the smooth outer surface of the outer sleeve deforms to produce an engaged stepped face thereon, so as to be engaged with the engaging stepped face of the mounting member to provide a resistance to dislodging of the rubber bushing from the mounting member in one of opposite axial directions.

As discussed below, the claim amendments server to highlight advantages of subject matter of the claims that are not realized by the cited references. Basis for the amendments can be found, for example, at paragraph [0040]-[0042] of the specification, and in FIGS. 4, 9, 10, 14, 18, 22 and 26.

Obviousness Rejections

We now turn to the rejection. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 16-24, 31 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over JP-U-5-77637 in view of Tanaka et al, or JP-

U-6-69469. As discussed below, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as applied to amended claims 1, 17, 31 and to the claims depending therefrom.

First, the primary reference to JP-U-5-77637 fails to disclose the mounting member having an engaging stepped face formed on an inner surface of the mounting member 41. The Examiner recognizes this shortcoming of JP-U-5-77637. However, the primary reference to JP-U-5-77637 also fails to disclose the above-mentioned features (b), (c) and (d).

Thus, for example, Tanaka et al (in FIG. 20) shows the engagement of the mounting sleeve (72) and the outer sleeve (10) of the bushing. Tanaka et al. does not disclose the above mentioned feature (a), i.e., the stepped face formed on the inner circumferential surface of the mounting sleeve (72), and the above mentioned features (b), (c) and (d), namely, the resin outer sleeve having a smooth outer surface before being press fit into the bore of the mounting sleeve (72) (see FIG. 6 and column 6, lines 16-20 of the specification).

As a result, even if JP-U-5-77637 and Tanaka et al are taken in combination, the combination would not yield the subject matter recited in the amended claims.

With further regard to the reference to JP-U-6-69469, the outer sleeve of the bushing has a corrugated outer surface, and at least fails to disclose the above mentioned features (b), (c) and (d), namely, a smooth outer surface at least at a location to be engaged with the stepped face of the mounting member, before being press fit into the bore of the mounting member (see Fig. 3 of JP-U-6-69469). That is, the outer sleeve (16) has an outer surface corresponding to the stepped or corrugated inner surface of the mounting member (10), before being press fit into the bore of the mounting member (10).

Furthermore, it should be appreciated that if the outer sleeve has the stepped or corrugated face before being press fit into the bore of the mounting member, it is very difficult to press fit the bushing into the mounting member, in comparison with the case of the smooth outer surface as recited in Applicant's claims, avoiding cracking or breakage of the outer sleeve (16).

Moreover, if the outer sleeve previously has the outer surface configuration corresponding to the stepped face of the inner surface of the mounting member, there is a problem of dislocation of the previously formed engaging stepped face and the previously formed engaged stepped face in the axial direction. However, according to the subject matter of Applicant's claims, the engaged stepped face is formed after being press fit into the bore of the mounting member. This is due to the elastic deformation of the outer sleeve with the smooth outer surface being pressed at a portion facing to the non-recessed portion of the mounting

member and being elastically expanded at a portion facing to the recessed portion. This arrangement is capable of eliminating the conventional problem of misengagement between the engaging stepped face and the engaged stepped face.

For at least the reasons just discussed, then, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 17, and other claims depending therefrom, are neither anticipated by JP-5-77637 or Tanaka et al, or JP-U-6-69469 nor would have been obvious over those skilled in the art by these references taken in combination. Regarding claim 31, it is respectfully submitted that a method of manufacturing the patentable vibration damping device as recited in claim 1 is also patentable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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